

REMARKS

Claims 28-54 are pending in the present application. None of the claims were amended in this response. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 28-33, 37-42 and 45-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C §102(e) as being anticipated by *Wolf* (US Patent 6,163,551). Claims 34-36, 43-44 and 53-54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Wolf* (US Patent 6,163,551) in view of *Wolf* (US Patent 5,886,996). Applicant respectfully traverse these rejections.

Specifically, *Wolf* fails to disclose the feature of “a converter in the at least one interface unit which converts the data describing the quality of the clock signal into messages, the format of the messages being independent of a format of the data transmitted, and which transmits the messages to the device for assessment” as recited in independent claim 28 and similarly recited in independent claims 37 and 47. The present claims address issues in the prior art, where clock signal qualities received from the interface cards must be assessed by a processor to determine which type of standardized format (e.g., PDH, SDH, SONET) the clock signals supplied belongs to in order to effect synchronization. Since the clock signal quality information items provided by the different interface types are in different formats, the clock signal qualities from different interface types must be treated separately in the main processor. Accordingly, the main processor requires subunits to provide additional and separate processing for each of the clock signal quality information according to the format (PDH, SDH, SONET). Under the recited claims, the clock signal quality is processed according to a single algorithm in the system, where conventional differentiation between the interface type is no longer required.

Wolf teaches a communication system operating according to the synchronous digital hierarchy (SDH) or synchronous optical network (SONET) standard (col. 3, lines 6-10), where interface units are divided between “top” and “bottom” sides of the network elements to determine hierarchically which interface units will participate in synchronization (col. 3, lines 16-21; col. 4, lines 19-27). Each of the interface units are connected to a selection unit (1) and control unit (7) to determine hierarchical position and selection during operation (FIG. 1). As the interface units receive incoming clock signals (STM-N), the interface units generate a synchronization quality marker using a synchronization status message (SSM) and forward them to the control unit (col. 3, lines 28-40; see Abstract). Once the quality markers are received at

the control unit, the control unit processes the quality markers (SSM) and makes a determination as to which qualities are acceptable (col. 3, line 56 - col. 4, line 7)

It should be noted that “STM” is well-known in the art as “Synchronous Transmission Module” and is the basic rate of transmission of the SDH network transmission standard (also of which SSM is a part of). Accordingly, Wolf clearly describes a synchronization system that operates *entirely under a single format* (see col. 3, lines 6-10). It cannot be reasonably asserted that generating service status messages (SSM) based off of STM clock signals is somehow “converting” the data describing the quality of the clock signal into messages, where the format of the messages is independent of a format of the data transmitted. As argued above, the SSM messages are directly dependent on the SDH (or SONET) format under which the system is operating from. Furthermore, with specific regard to claims 28 and 37, the converting occurs before the quality of the clock signal is assessed. Wolf clearly fails to show such a configuration.

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 103 are improper and should be withdrawn. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If any additional fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Examiner is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818. If such a deduction is made, please indicate the attorney docket no. (0112740-184) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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